



July/August 2023

caring & sharing news
Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 20, Number 4

Annual Picnic and Lotus Flower Lantern Release

Locust Shade Park
Marigold Pavilion

Sunday, October 8, 2023
4:00 p.m.

On Sunday, October 8, 2023, join us at our Annual Picnic and Lotus Flower Lantern Release to remember all the children who died too soon but are still in the hearts of family and friends. As we release lotus flowers on the pond we are reminded of the beauty that our children brought into our lives.

Please bring a dish to share for our Pot-Luck Picnic. Chicken, Hot Dogs and Drinks will be provided by the chapter.

Monetary donations are appreciated to cover the cost of the lotus flower lanterns and picnic expenses.

Each person will receive one lantern unless you request additional lanterns.

To RSVP or for more information contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or email: bpusanova@gmail.com.

Please Check E-mails & Facebook

Almost all of our Chapter Communication is done via email. Please check your emails at least once a week. Everything from the newsletter to Chapter Announcements are sent through email. It would also be helpful to respond to all emails sent regarding the Chapter. That lets me know that you did see the email and that I have a correct email address – a simple “got it” would be better than no response at all!

It would also be helpful if you would join our private Facebook page. Please check this page on a regular basis. A Facebook page has been set up for our chapter. Members can join our group at **Bereaved Parents of the USA/Northern VA Chapter**. This is a closed group for privacy purposes, so nothing posted here will go into your regular News Feed for your regular FB friends to see. Request to join the group and approval will be sent to you.

Attention

Due to the rising costs of printing and postage, this will be the last mailed newsletter. Newsletters will be sent out via email. If you are not already receiving our newsletters via email, please fill out the information form (in this newsletter) to include an email address so you can continue to receive our newsletter.

If you do not have an email address, please fill out the information form, indicate you do not have email and mail us the form.

Rock-It Creations

If you would like to have a rock in the Memorial Garden in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild, we highly recommend that you order through “Rock-It Creations.” The rocks are river rocks and will last a life-time! Your rock can be personalized and customized. Please order the large size rocks, either the custom or standard rocks, for our Memorial Garden. There is no shipping charges or taxes on the rocks.

Go to Rock-It Creations’ website to order a rock in memory of your loved one, <https://www.rockitcreations.com/>

If you have any questions, contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or bpusanova@gmail.com

Tell Us Your Story

Interested in sharing your child's story for a book designed to give other Bereaved Parents hope?



We are looking for parents who would be willing to be interviewed and have their story written (with your approval) OR write your own story for submission.

Contact Sue Cerrone for more info at 703-819-8604 or Suebcerrone@gmail.com

Save the Dates & Plan to Attend BPUSA National Gathering July 26 ~ 28, 2024

At

Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel
Herndon, VA

Garden News

Just want to remind everyone that our Memorial Garden is a beautiful, peaceful place to go to remember our precious children. It is open to everyone and it is a place you can go to get fresh air and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

The Memorial Garden belongs to all of us Bereaved Parents. It's a labor of love! We could really use your help to keep the garden maintained, weeded and watered. When you work in the garden, it's a way to honor your child.

There are garden vases at the garden that you can use to place fresh cut flowers. Please cut the flowers to fit in the vases. Please refrain from putting artificial flowers out in the garden during the flower growing season, May to October. If you would like to plant some flowers, you are more than welcome to do so. Please plant flowers that are deer resistant.

If you have any questions about the garden, please contact Bev Ruane at 540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c) or email: ruane.beverly@yahoo.com.



There is a meeting for everyone! Join us at one of these meetings!

Caring & Sharing Meetings

In-Person Meetings

First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA
4th Sunday @ 3:00 p.m.

Zoom Meetings

2nd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.

I will send out an email with password and log in information prior to the meeting date.

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bpusanova@gmail.com

Book Club

Our Book Club meets on the last Monday of the month at 7 p.m. We will meet both on Zoom and in person at Sue Cerrone's home, 9564 Basilwood Drive, Manassas, VA.

Please email bpusanova@gmail.com, if you would like to receive emails about the Book Club.

The Zoom log-in will be emailed to everyone a couple days before the Book Club meets.

For more information contact Sue at suebcerrone@gmail.com or call 703-819-8604. Please RSVP if you are attending in person or on Zoom.

Photos Needed

It isn't too early to send photos of your child for our December Service of Remembrance Slide show. If I don't have your child's picture, please send to Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com as soon as possible.

I also am looking for photos of any chapter events over the past 20 years. I would like to put together a slideshow for the Service of Remembrance commemorating our chapter's 20-year anniversary.

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

2nd Sunday @ 3:00 p.m.
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA

A support group meeting for parents whose children have been murdered.

For more info contact:
Beverly Ruane
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"



DAVID J COBB
FOUNDATION

1st Sunday of Each Month
1:00~2:30 p.m.

Meetings held at ACTS
9317 Grant Ave, Manassas, VA

For more information contact: Kimberly Fleming
Office: 571-377-8134 or Cell: 703-349-9184
email: kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org
website: www.djcfoundation.org

Sibling Support Group

Virtual Support Meetings for
any bereaved sibling over the age of 18
will be held on the
last Thursday of each month.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84851846327?pwd=dlJiM3VPdkFkVzFvWWtxbm80RkdWdz09>

Meeting ID: 848 [5184 6327](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84851846327?pwd=dlJiM3VPdkFkVzFvWWtxbm80RkdWdz09)
Passcode: 3EDn58

Our Son/Brother Jason Duane Alexander



July 2, 1974 – July 24, 2013

Where do I begin to tell you about our beloved son Jason? He had a quiet spirit about him, and was soft-spoken. He was very witty, and had a great sense of humor. As a child, people would often tell him he had “a million dollar” smile. An avid Jeopardy viewer, his friends often referred to him as a “walking encyclopedia”. He was great at all the Sport and Mythology categories. You could ask him anything, and he probably knew the answer.

The Dallas Cowboys and the Baltimore Orioles were his top sports teams. His favorite meal was a good ‘ole hamburger! Each year on his birthday we go out for hamburgers in his honor. He loved music of all genres, Frank Sinatra, Neil Young, etc., but he also loved his heavy metal groups like Metallica and Megadeth. Ironically, he was at a concert, enjoying himself, the night he passed. He had just celebrated his 39th birthday three weeks prior.

Jason was a kind, caring, and dependable soul. He would give you the shirt off his back; he was always there for you. We didn’t know it until after his passing that he footed the total air fare/cruise packet for a friend (going through a difficult time) without asking to be reimbursed. That was the kind of person he was.

A three-bedroom condo “his bachelor pad”, brand new car, and his “kits” were his pride and joy. He loved sharing stories of their antics. He referred to his ferrets, Aeris, Telaria, and Baby as his “naughty girls”.

He worked for 15 years at ATCC (*American Type Culture Collection*), a *Global Biological Resource Center*. His co-workers and friends submitted these tributes about the person he was, and his impact on them...he was a good and reliable employee, was a tremendous asset, always happy, kind, sincere, and helpful to his colleagues, always had a smile and kind words for everyone, a real treasure, an extraordinary person, very special, one of the kindest people I ever met, most decent, honest, and loving person, a pleasure to work with, a “gentle giant”. Jason, and his brother Brian, were often referred to as the “Twin Towers” when they were together; they stood at 6’4” and 6’6”. His colleagues said that he was never one to ask anything of anyone, but was always willing to help a friend, had a wonderful sense of humor, and a ‘gentleness’ that shined!

There’s NEVER a day that goes by without a thought or memory of him. A tear rolling down my cheek or misty eyes are always nearby. Like the saying goes, “sometimes memories sneak out of my eyes, and roll down my cheeks.” It’s been nine years since our hearts were shattered; but life goes on. It feels like it was only yesterday; he’s always on my mind. Our family misses him dearly. Life, as we knew it, changed that day! I see “heart shapes”, and view them as signs saying “I love you”.

On a wet and dreary day, a few years after Jason’s passing, I was cleaning out a box of some of his belongings in a closet. Halfway through it, I decided I’d leave the rest for another day. The following Saturday (Mother’s Day weekend) I went back to my task. I ran across an envelope addressed to our local newspaper. I opened it, and there was an entry form titled “My Mother is the Best Mom Because”. Jason, at 12 years-old, had planned to submit it, but never mailed it. Anyway, I called my eldest son in Norway to tell him about my surprise find. He said, “Mom, you weren’t supposed to find it last week...it was meant for you to find today, in time for Mother’s Day!” Naturally, tears of joy and comfort started trickling down my face. Once again, on that weekend, I received a Mother’s Day card from both of my sons. Yes, I have two sons one lives in Norway, the other lives in my heart.

The next day at church I said to my friend, Barbara Turner, “you’re never going to believe what happened to me”. After sharing with her, she said, “that’s a *Godwink*”! I’d never heard of that term, so she explained it by saying it was like an “aha moment” from God...sort of like *I gotcha!* One definition says “a *Godwink* is an

experience someone has that is so incredible that it is seen as a sign of divine intervention.” Often mistaken as mere coincidence, Godwinks are seen as an answer to prayer. My friend insisted that I share it on the *Godwink* site. After thinking about it for a few weeks, I did. The next thing I knew, Squire Rushnell, author of the *Godwink* books, emailed and called me. He asked for permission to use my Godwink. At the time he had a slot on the [Kathie Lee and Hoda Show](#) where he featured Godwinks people have experienced. The rest is history; NBC picked up my Godwink! You can GOOGLE [21 Godwinks on Today](#) or click on <https://youtu.be/cd-I4bmWNKI> to view it. Squire explains Godwinks in this video. Whenever I experience a Godwink moment, I just say, “thank you, God!” Look for signs, they’re always there, and appear when you least expect them, but need them.

Shortly after Jason’s passing, we were contacted by Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader of the Northern Virginia BPUSA, (*Bereaved Parents of the USA*). She sent us a sympathy card, and invited us to a meeting. I wasn’t ready to go, but decided to check it out. I was a basket case at my first meeting. However, this group of people have been a Godsend; they all know too well what we’ve gone through, and continue to go through. We are a unique group of people who never expected to belong to this “club”. However, many friendships have been made, and no one judges you. We have monthly BPUSA meetings in person, Zoom meetings, and a Book Club via Zoom or in person. This group listens, laughs, consoles, and is always there for support. We remember our children yearly with Butterfly and Lotus Flower Lantern releases, picnics, social gatherings, and a Candle Lighting Service of Remembrance in December (*with a slide presentation of our children*). During your time of grief, you couldn’t ask for a more caring, and dedicated group of people who often become lifetime friends, even from Zoom meetings!

Jason’s Mom, Dad, & Brother (Mary, Neil and Brian Alexander)



Godwink (god•wink)

1. An event, seemingly coincidental, but coming from divine origin.
2. Another word for answered prayer.



Thawed Chicken
7-12-22



Potato



Frozen Carrot
2-17-21



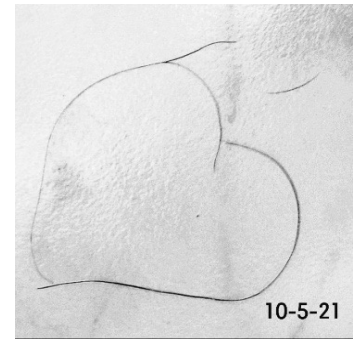
Onion Ring
Neil 2018



Cube Steak
7-21-2021



Fig Newton
6-9-22



Locks of hair on tile floor
10-5-21

Chicken and cube steak were bought, as is, at a grocery store; our son Brian found a heart-shaped potato in Norway; carrot was in a bag of frozen vegetables; onion ring was served at a restaurant; filling in Fig Newton had oozed out in a heart-shape. Locks of hair were found on bathroom tile floor...coincidences?

Why Are You Still Here?

By Alan Pedersen

It might sound like a strange question to ask of somebody attending a grief support group meeting, but really it is quite common. Over the years I have encountered many new griever who couldn't comprehend why someone whose loss was many years ago, would still be attending a support group. So, let's take a moment and explore this dynamic.

To begin with, try to remember what it felt like for you the very first time you attended a support group meeting. You probably experienced anxiety and mixed emotions about sitting down with people you did not know and sharing your deepest pain. You may have felt vulnerable and out of your comfort zone. Now, imagine you meet somebody who tells you their loss was 15 years ago.

The first thought you might have is; why are they here? You wonder is something wrong with this person, or this grief support group? You might be scared off thinking to yourself; do I have to come here for 15 years? When we are new in grief, we don't know what to expect of ourselves or others, so these are normal questions to have.

Now let's take a look at why somebody would attend a grief support group for so many years. In my experience, the number one reason is to help others. Experienced grievers understand that their presence is needed to provide hope and living proof that you can in fact survive and thrive after the death of your child, grandchild, or sibling. Another reason those of us down the road attend support groups is because it allows us to stay connected to our own beautiful loved ones.

As years go by, many grieving parents, grandparents and siblings may rarely get to hear the name or share stories of their loved ones. Grief support groups are a place where everybody is welcome to celebrates the love and connection no matter how long it has been.

The bottom line is, all of us benefit in a grief support group when we understand that we each bring something very valuable to the table. We lean on each other, and provide understanding no matter how long or how short the time has been since we suffered our loss.

As seasoned grievers, it is important to share our stories with those who are very new. It is important to offer the hope and help we have found. It is most important however to let those who may be attending their first meeting know that we are no longer there because we have to be, we are there because we want to be.



Happy Heavenly
Birthday,
Tony
We miss you
and love you
so much.
Seize the day and
the Angel Food
Cake!!

Upcoming Social Events

**Thursday, August 24
6:00 p.m.**

**Dinner at United Buffet
2942 Prince William Pkwy,
Woodbridge, VA**

**Saturday, September 16
11:00 a.m.**

**Brunch at Ashton Ave
Family Restaurant,
9920 Cockrell Road,
Manassas, VA**



We Remember Our Children Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in July and August

Jason Duane Alexander
7/02/74 ~ 7/24/13

Cora Rose Bardwell
8/24/98 ~ 7/10/20

James "Jimmy" Barnette
7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06

Jennifer Lynn Becker
12/30/67 ~ 7/26/70

Trevor Austin Blake
10/30/01 ~ 8/11/13

Kenny Brooks Jr
8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06

Claire Rebecca Buckley
7/27/11 ~ 11/17/16

Brandon Bundy
5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08

Christopher Chapman
8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07

Jason A. Clover
7/30/84 ~ 9/28/03

David Joseph Cobb
7/02/98 ~ 10/23/15

Todd Clifford Coder
7/23/84 ~ 9/24/10

Sarah Beth Cole
8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11

Michael Costanzo
7/07/98 ~ 12/22/20

Ryan Cross
7/12/97 ~ 7/26/17

Gregory Dennis
8/26/98 ~ 7/26/17

Corey Martin Dill
7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07

Forrest Grant Dotson
8/25/79 ~ 4/19/17

David John Drumheller
8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16

Bryan Eastes
8/18/80 ~ 4/18/17

Elizabeth A. Erickson
7/23/89 ~ 9/14/89

Robert Alan Finch
7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01

Omisha Flagg-McDowell,
8/28/80 ~ 7/08/21

Rhonda Lynn Flannery
7/31/63 ~ 11/10/01

Bruce Lee Foxworthy
8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12

Clay Matthew Haga
12/09/88 ~ 8/26/19

Charlotte Gaston
7/21/98 ~ 6/23/21

Aliyah Denise Henderson
5/20/03 ~ 8/23/22

Nathan Hamilton
7/19/99 ~ 9/04/18

Ashley Hoefling
8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17

Victoria Renee Holman
12/27/98 - 07/23/22

Daniel Franklin Houston
8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16

Ethan Humphrey
6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16

Kyle Irwin
07/27/92 ~ 4/21/20

Claude (Jason) Jackson III
8/20/92 ~ 9/12/15

Ryan Gardiner James
2/17/99 ~ 7/06/19

John William Kennedy
1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18

Ryan George Khazmo
7/10/02 ~ 10/16/21

Kwadwo Amoako Kusi
3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08

Thomas Langston
4/05/92 ~ 8/04/18

April Charlotte Lillicotch
7/27/04 ~ 2/24/20

Robert Loiseau
8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93

Sara Lott
11/01/95 ~ 7/23/08

Kyle Ludeman
4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13

Brienna Lux
8/09/90 ~ 8/17/20

Robert Henry Maples
6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18

Kevin McGuin
2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08

Emily "Tabor" McMullen
1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12

Derek Meffert
4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10

Michael Joseph Moore
7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09

Christina Morgan
7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02

Johnny Ray Mullins
7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02

Elijah James Nealey
9/08/10 ~ 8/22/12

Nicholas James Nelson
7/16/90 ~ 4/19/18

Brian Scott Ogden
7/04/87 ~ 12/24/17

Kim Ouren
9/19/57 ~ 7/22/18

Thomas Parker
8/26/92 ~ 4/15/19

Evan David Peugh
8/3/90 ~ 4/26/14

Catzby James Pitzvada
8/07/88 ~ 12/17/19

Zane J Pitzvada
8/22/92 ~ 9/14/11

Linda Thompson Plewes
7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02

Kylene Marie Privett
12/14/83 ~ 8/13/07

Khalif Rashon Privott
7/21/94 ~ 7/13/16

Ronald Douglas Ralph, Jr
7/27/66 ~ 11/04/02

Clarke "Dani" Reese
8/31/93 ~ 2/25/07

Carl Andrew Runion
7/27/94 ~ 5/14/21

Vernon Santmyer, Jr.
8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11

Matthew Donald Scott
8/07/78 ~ 7/19/20

Gene "Tony" Sergent
8/10/87 ~ 9/14/07

Klee Simmons
3/27/89 ~ 8/09/15

Brandon Simms
10/10/80 ~ 7/14/95

Adelacia Smalley
8/06/94 ~ 10/19/02

Tyler Smith
9/20/92 ~ 8/01/06

Daniel "Cody" Starr
4/13/88 ~ 7/30/20

Robert Andrew Starling
8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18

Michael "Ryan" Stevens
7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07

Grace Nicole Stone
8/20/99 ~ 11/01/18

Jerry Damon Taybron
11/21/75 ~ 8/18/07

Dana Thrall
8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01

Anthony Joseph Turchiano
8/04/79 ~ 4/29/17

Kisha Grace Woods
8/06/17 ~ 8/06/17

Kevin Woods
12/08/93 ~ 8/06/14

Jakari D. Wright
3/31/97 ~ 8/18/18

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Children" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your child's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of July and August, please provide us with your child's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

Bereaved Parents of the USA Welcome

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives.

We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

Chapter Contact Information

Jodi Norman, Leader
P.O. Box 7675
Woodbridge, VA 22195
Phone: 703-656-6999
bpusanova@gmail.com



Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Someone Cares About You

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.



Attention: If you do not wish to continue to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, please let us know by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing bpusanova@gmail.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

Bereaved Parents of the USA
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